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BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,

FEBRUARY 15th, 1867.

Read and ordered to be printed.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

Grand Jury of Baltimore City,

PRAYING THAT A PLACE OF PUNISHMENT MAY BE PROVIDED FOR

MINOR COLORED CHILDREN.

ANNAPOLIS:
HENRY A. LUCAS, PRINTER.

1867.

1867.

MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable,

the General Assembly of Maryland:

The undersigned, members of the Grand Jury of the Criminal Court of Baltimore city, respectfully represent to your Honorable Body that, in the discharge of their duties, many cases of offenses on the part of negro children, from the age of ten to fifteen years, are brought before us which do not seem to be of sufficient magnitude to demand punishment by imprisonment in the Penitentiary, and which, because of the absence of any other place of detention, are dismissed. Yet experience has shown that the effects of imprisonment with older criminals, and the absence of all punishment, generally are, to harden these childrenin guilt, and to embolden them to the commission of other crimes—leading to repeated imprisonments.

We believe that a remedy which would go far towards curing this great evil could be found by the establishment of an institution similar to the House of Refuge, with the same powers to receive and hold negro children as is possessed by that institution.

We are satisfied that the future welfare of these children, and consequently also the interests of the community, would be promoted by such action as we have indicated.

And to show to your Honoroble Body that we are not alone, in the opinions here expressed, we beg leave to present the following extracts from the Report of the Grand Jury for January term of 1866 to the Criminal Court of Baltimore:

"We have found confined in the jail quite a number of young negroes of both sexes between the ages of ten and fifteen years. Most of them are committed by magistrates upon trivial charges, and after an imprisonment of from ten to thirty days are discharged. Others are held upon charges which require the investigation of this body; of this class many are discharged, not from the want of legal evidence of guilt, but from a belief in the minds of the jurors that from their youth and ignorance of right from wrong, they are not morally accountable to the law for their actions. But

imprisonment in idleness, and contact with older peisoners hardens them in guilt and gives new lessons in the school o crime. Besides these, there are also many other cases which do not fall under our cognizance from the unwillingness of parties to prosecute.

We respectfully represent that justice to the negro, and economy to the tax-payers alike demand that provision similar to that which now exists with such marked benefit for the white should also be extended to the black race."

Also, to the following extract from the Report of the Grand Jury for May term, 1866:

"We suggest to the Court that humanity and justice also demand that a more suitable place of confinement than the jail should be provided for the many negro children of both sexes, who are committed mostly for trivial offences."

We would therefore most earnestly urge upon your Honorable Body the passage of a law authorizing the incorporation of an institution for the purposes designated, and as in duty bound we will ever pray.

W. H. Perkins,
Jas. J. Waters,
Wm. H. Bayzand,
F. Raine,
John B. Seidenstriker,
L. Jarrett,
Joshua Lynch,
Jason Rogers,
Geo. H. Dutton,
Thomas H. Spencer,
Thomas E. Dell,
James Fuller,
Jno. J. Ford,
Edmund Bull,
Ernest W. Briding,
Geo. P. Thomas,
John G. Hedinge,
Edward Carroll,
W. H. Peane,
Joseph Holt,
E. Hanzsche,
Wm. Addison,
W. W. McClellan,

Since I have occupied the position of Sheriff of Baltimore city, I have been forcibly impressed with the great need for a refuge for colored minors who are constantly arrested for petty criminal offences, and unhesitatingly endorse the annexed memorial.

W. THOMPSON,
Sheriff Balto. City.